

REMARKS

The Office Action of November 9, 1999 has been considered.

Claims 13-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 13 and 14 are amended.

Claims 13-25 remain pending.

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended herein, is requested.

Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to more particularly point and claim the subject matter, which the applicants regard as their invention.

Claims 13-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Holm et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,850,629) in view of Waters et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,657,426). Holm et al. discloses a text-to-speech synthesizer for translating a plurality of discontinuous user-selected portions of text in an independent target application into an audio output that sounds like human speech. The synthesizer includes a transport control bar 36, a play button 36 on the transport control bar 36, and a text-to-speech engine 202. The synthesizer further includes a control panel 38. The control panel 38 has four control groups: focal dimension control 82, gender selection 84, numerical/table conversion control 86, and fast forward and rewind jump sizing 88. The focal dimension control 82 provides user setting of the speech amplitude with the volume lever 90. The pace at which the text is spoken may be increased or decreased with the speed lever 92, and the fundamental voice frequency may be set to the user's preference with the frequency lever 94. (See col. 5, lines 19-28.) In operation, a user selects by highlighting portions of the text, which are to be converted into speech. The user then activates the play button 36 to begin converting the selected text portion into speech using the text-to-speech engine 202.

Holm et al., however, does not teach or suggest the step of adjusting a duration of each phoneme using a synchronization adjuster so as to synchronize a processing result of the prosody processor with a picture signal, as required by claim 14. The Examiner has asserted that "Fig. 4, item 80" of Holm et al. is the synchronization adjuster of claim 14. Applicants point out that Holm et al. discloses only that "the control panel 38 is activated when the control button 80, located on the transport bar 36, is selected by the user." (See col. 5, lines 13-18.) Thus, the control panel 38 or the control button 80 does not synchronize a processing result of the prosody processor with a picture signal, as recited in claim 14. In fact, Holm et al. fails to teach any synchronization of synthesized speech using a picture signal.

Waters et al. discloses a method for producing synthetic speech from speech text input. The method includes the steps of converting the speech text input to a series of elemental speech units, continuously transforming the series of elemental speech unit to audio signals, and generating a sequence of facial configurations corresponding to the series of elemental speech units. (See col. 2, lines 14-19.) Like Holm et al., Waters et al. also fails to teach or suggest the step of adjusting a duration of each phoneme using a synchronization adjuster so as to synchronize a processing result of the prosody processor with a picture signal, as required by claim 14.

In fact, Waters et al. merely teaches that artificial facial images are generated after the creation of elemental speech units. In other words, Water et al. synthesizes facial images based on the elemental speech units. In contrast, the present invention, as claimed in claim 14, synthesizes speech based on, among others, the picture signal. Furthermore, the claimed invention defines and utilizes timing information derived from multimedia/natural moving picture to interlock or synchronize text-to-speech (TTS) with multimedia/natural moving

picture. With this information, TTS actively adapts phonemic duration in a sentence to align the synthetic speech with multimedia/natural moving picture.

Therefore, neither Holm et al. nor Waters et al. (either singly or in combination), discloses or suggest all of the limitations of claim 14. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested. For the same reasons, claims 15-25 depending from claim 14, and independent apparatus claim 13 are also patentable over these cited references.

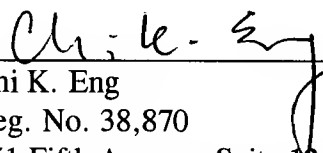
It is respectfully submitted that all claims currently pending in the above-identified application are now in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notification of which is earnestly solicited. If in the Examiner's opinion prosecution of the present application would be advanced by a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application; however, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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